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How to Think Pictures, How to Visualize Texts?

Part I includes three chapters discussing the value of studying images, as well as texts, for the comprehension of early modern literatures, authors, and traditions. It shows how much we gain from combining approaches and opening our practices to a dialogue between visuality and textuality, and addresses new questions that emerge from this cross-disciplinary perspective. Raman Sinha's 'Iconography of Tulsīdās' focuses on the various textual and visual representations through time (from premodern to modern) of the famous and celebrated author of the *Rāmcaritmānas*, Tulsīdās. He underlines the different traditions in the portraiture of the poet and shows the distinctions between textual and visual representations, considering also notions of time, context, and audience. The case studies of Sūrdās's and Nāgarīdās's poetry and its illustrations are discussed in John Stratton Hawley's 'When Blindness Makes for Sight' and Heidi Pauwels's 'Reading Pictures: Towards a Synoptic Reading Combining Textual and Art Historical Approaches'. They both question the link between a text and the image(s) related to that text. The inquiry developed by Hawley is how can an artist keep the surprise ('oral epiphany') included in Sūrdās's poems when the medium is a visual one, which implies a global vision of the story at first sight. In other words, how is the complexity of the text retained when developed step by step in the poem through an image with an immediate impact? Hawley shows the various strategies adopted by the artists navigating between Sūrdās's text and the visual reading they offer, following their own creativity. Pauwels's concern is, as a textual historian, how does one include in a textual study the visual medium which she considers as part of the reception history of a text, as it is the case for a commentary, in order to create a better understanding of bhakti poetry. By comparing illustrations based on Nāgarīdās's text and illustrations inspired, or probably inspired, by Nāgarīdās's poetry, and by taking in consideration arguments made by art historians, she shows how including the analysis of illustrations in the study of a tradition leads to new interpretations.

Since the visual turn in the nineties and the development of the visual studies,[1] supplied by cultural studies, the image has been the centre of preoccupations and has shown its interpretative potential, reconfiguring the classical frame of art history. The debates on what an image is and how they are to be studied have expanded through many disciplines and fields. It is therefore no surprise that the need has arisen to analyse images with (and beyond) art history and in dialogue with textual history for a deeper understanding of early modern literatures and traditions in South Asian studies, materialised in this volume. Starting from the various examples discussed and analysed in the contributions in Part I, I consider here three modes of thinking about visuality: First, I start with a discussion on the text-image pairing and on possible tools at our disposal to analyse their relationship, especially when they are in co-presence; second, I examine the link between images and their viewers as considered by religious studies, that is, the study of images as practices; finally, I interrogate the possible influence of images on early modern textual production with a brief case study.

The text-image pairing

The three chapters that comprise this part share the concern of studying visuality in relation with textuality and generate new questions about this relationship and about what can be produced when comparing the two media. In the various examples which are developed, the relationship between text and image is shown as complex, creative, and meaningful, since no simple and unique answer emerges when the two media express the same object (in our case, the content of a poem or an author's portraiture). This complexity and the multileveled reading generated through the text-image relation is due to a variety of internal and external factors such as the different actors (poet, painter, patron, audience) involved in the process; the context, place, and time of production, which are not always the same; the specific intrinsic constraints related to each medium; and the dialogue which is produced between the two media.

In Pauwels's and Hawley's chapters (and partly in Sinha's), the images analysed are taken as illustrations of poetical texts and discussed as such. Chronologically, they are subordinated to the text, which they transpose in a visual form. But

1 W. J. T. Mitchell's 'pictorial turn' (see *Picture Theory* 1994) and Gottfried Boehm's 'iconic turn' (see *Was ist ein Bild?* 1994) are the main protagonists of this new perspective, discussed at the time by many authors in various fields. If their analyses differ on some points, they share the idea of a language specific to images going beyond the classical science of art (Stiegler (2008), pp. 2–3). In the German scholarship, the term *Bildwissenschaften* is used to designate the research area of 'visual studies'.

this subordination in time does not imply a less significant impact of the image, nor a less interesting or meaningful reading. Images use their own language and are an invitation to a multileveled reading:

> Aujourd'hui cela fait longtemps que l'on ne considère plus les images contenues dans les manuscrits comme de simples « illustrations », dont la lecture serait subordonnée au texte et l'importance finalement moindre par rapport à l'écrit. Les images organisent, structurent, commentent et mettent en scène le texte (lorsque ce n'est pas l'inverse) ou, conçues comme des aides à la compréhension, attirent l'attention du lecteur sur le message que l'œuvre veut transmettre. Grâce à un langage qui leur est propre, les images peuvent même véhiculer un récit ou une lecture sensiblement différents du texte qui les entoure. Elles invitent ainsi à une lecture à plusieurs niveaux de l'œuvre qu'elles accompagnent.[2]

The complexity of the text-image relationship is due to the fact that the illustrator, working sometimes in collaboration with his patron (as suggested by Pauwels), when being in charge of transforming a text into an image, behaves not only as the illustrator but as an interpreter. And as such adds, cuts, focuses, develops, and reduces some of the elements he has selected in the text—or outside the text. This is obvious in the examples developed by Pauwels and Hawley when comparing a poem and the illustration of that poem, and the same process applies for the visual description of the biography of Tulsīdās as presented by Sinha. They both underline the additions, the differences of interpretation, or the introduction of elements from the context of production which are integrated in the final image. As they show, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the 'original' text and the image derived from it, no faithful transcription without a visible intervention from the illustrator. Quite the opposite; the process can be described as interpretative, transformative, and creative. Both Pauwels and Hawley use the term 'translation' to designate this process, which invites us to consider the issues of the dialogue between text and image in the same way we consider the translation process from one text to another.[3] Such translation from text to another medium is theorized by Roman Jakobson in his definition of categories of translation as an 'intersemiotic translation', meaning 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems'.[4] Our case studies are examples of poems (a ver-

2 Wetzel and Flückiger (2009), p. 12.

3 On translation, see the introduction to Part II by Allison Busch and to Part III by Maya Burger in this volume.

4 Jakobson (1959), p. 233. The 'intersemiotic translation or *transmutation*' is the third kind of translation identified by Jakobson which can also cover a transposition from a literary text to other nonverbal signs systems such as music, dance, or photography. The two others are the 'intralingual translation or *rewording*', which is 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language', and the 'interlingual transpo-

bal signs system) which are interpreted in paintings (a nonverbal signs system), a creative transposition to be read not as a simple transaction but as a meaningful process of transformation.

The text-image relation can be thought of in other ways to the transposition from textuality to visuality. In contrast, the text can be itself an illustration of an image, clarifying its content, adding information or developing an idea. As Louvel and Scepi note, this passage from image to text is due to the intrinsic status of the image itself which is asking for verbalization and explanation. In other words, the image needs the text.[5] The text can also behave as if it is an image (especially in poetry), developing metaphors and searching to create a mental image for the reader. In this case, the link between text and image needs to be studied inside the text itself.[6] And finally, the image can do what a text does in narration; developing its content and meaning step by step, organising the space, and guiding the viewer's eye from one point to another. In the cases where, like in illustrated manuscripts, text and image are in co-presence, we also need to think about the place where the text is located.[7] Is it beside the painting? On the top or on the bottom? Is it on the back of the illustration? Is it inside the illustration, for example denominating some characters who are represented, as is quite common? Should we consider the text as part of the illustration or not? How do our eyes, as readers or viewers, jump from text to image or from image to text? In which order? How many times? At which moment? Is there a correlation between the text and the image? The questions are numerous and relevant.

Scholarship on the text-image relation has elaborately dealt with the moment of co-presence of the two media. For this discussion, the literary critics from the nineties coined the term of 'iconotext', taking its roots in the French scholarly community[8] and later defined by Peter Wagner as the 'use of (by way of reference or allusion, in an explicit or implicit way) an image in a text or vice versa'.[9] From this perspective, the text-image pairing is seen as mutually interdependent in the way it establishes meaning. The literary critic and theorist Liliane Louvel, anoth-

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sition or *translation proper*', which is 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language'.

5 'Si l'image, par opposition au texte, appelle une perception d'ensemble immédiate—ainsi qu'y insistait Lessing—, il reste que le perçu n'est pas le su et que le visible semble attirer à lui la parole : l'image sollicite le texte, réclame la verbalisation.' (Louvel and Scepi (2005), p. 10)

6 An example of this process is analysed in the thesis of Biljana Zrnic (2016).

7 Pauwels, in her chapter, pays attention to where the text of Nāgarīdās is positioned from one painting to another.

8 Heck (1999), p. 37, in a collection of critical essays entitled *Iconotextes* and edited by Alain Montandon in 1990.

9 Wagner (1996), p. 15. On Wagner's use of iconotext, see also his *Reading Iconotexts* (1997).

er French scholar, grasped this term and theorized it in several works published in French and translated partially in English.[10] For her, the iconotext

> illustrates perfectly the attempt to merge text and image in a pluriform fusion, as in an oxymoron. The word 'iconotext' conveys the desire to bring together two irreducible objects and form a new object in a fruitful tension in which each object maintains its specificity. It is therefore a perfect word to designate the ambiguous, aporetic, and in-between object of our analysis.[11]

In this definition, the interdependence between the two media is always present, neither the image nor the text is free from its counterpart. But in addition, their co-presence and interdependence creates a third object, a new one, an in-between object producing its own signification. This is clearly visible in the case studies presented in this part of the volume, since the new object created by the fusion of text and image carries new significations which are built on a fructuous dynamic of going and coming back. With this notion of iconotext and the idea that texts and images are in an 'infinite dialogue', Louvel elaborates a detailed typology of the various forms of relation between text and image,[12] showing the multiple variations of this dialogue. Even if strong emphasis is placed on the literary modalities of inscribing images in the text and on the narrative functions of the image, the diverse concepts elaborated by Louvel, in dialogue with the authors of visual studies, help us to rethink the text-image relationship.

The image and the viewer

The three chapters in this part are all concerned with the production of religious poetry connected to the bhakti movement of early modern India. The illustrations they discuss need to be understood as objects of communication (beside textual production) of religious ideals belonging to the Krishnaite and Ramaite traditions. In some illustrations discussed by Pauwels, it is shown how the patron, and in some cases his family, are inserted in the paintings and become 'active participants in the mythological realm'. The reasons for a patron to ask for the illustration of a specific manuscript are numerous: to reach a wider audience, to follow the fashion of major courts, to produce a parallel between a text, its author,

10 See her *Poetics of the Iconotext* (2011), edited by Jacobs and translated by Petit, which is a selection of her previous works: *L'oeil du texte. Texte et image dans la littérature de langue anglaise* (1998) and *Texte/image: images à lire, textes à voir* (2002).
11 Louvel (2011), p. 15.
12 Her typology (see Part II of *Poetics of the Iconotext*, especially pp. 56–66) draws on Genette's categories of transtextuality, developed in *Palimpsestes* (1982).

its content, and the patron's own story, to spread religious or political messages. In the study of Tulsīdās's premodern portraitures, Sinha argues for a sanctification and a deification process in the representations of the poet, being assimilated to the content of his poetry. In modern and performative representations, on the contrary, the human aspects of the poet are depicted 'in such a way that the contemporary viewer may empathize with the poet in his distress and sublimation'. Hawley shows in one of his examples that the poet Sūrdās is represented in the painting illustrating one of his poems and suggests a simultaneous seeing-listening process for the connoisseur. As we can see in these examples, the context of production and of the diffusion of a visual representation is important and needs to be considered. Who is asking for the production of an image or a statue? For what purpose? For whom is the representation conceived? Where will the representation be shown? How is the image seen and used? These questions demonstrate how necessary it is to analyse the image and take into consideration various aspects of the transmission from the production of the image to its reception.

Scholars of the Study of religions, who have included the study of visuality in their analysis and understanding of religious movements, take especially into consideration the modalities of interaction between the image and the viewer. As David Morgan defines:

> The study of religious visual culture is therefore the study of images, but also the practices and habits that rely on images as well as the attitudes and preconceptions that inform vision as a cultural act.[13]

From this perspective, it is suggested to read images not as inert objects but as practices which produce meaning, allowing a clearer perception of their role.[14] Consequently, with this approach, the attention of the analysis is paid to the modes of seeing, encompassing various aspects which enhance an understanding of how images are interpreted and lived in religious contexts. David Morgan calls 'the particular configuration of ideas, attitudes, and customs that informs a religious act of seeing as it occurs within a given cultural and historical setting' the 'sacred gaze'. This 'gaze consists of several parts: a viewer, fellow viewers, the subject of their viewing, the context or setting of the subject, and the rules that govern the particular relationship between viewers and subject.'[15]

In the visual religious practices of South Asia, we are familiar with the concept of *darśana*, but this concept covers various aspects and can take distinctive forms[16] which gives the occasion to study this specific practice from different

13 Morgan (2005), p. 3.
14 Knauss and Pezzoli-Olgiati (2015b), p. 2.
15 Morgan (2005), p. 3.
16 Ibid., p. 48.

angles. Also, other aspects can be the focus of research,[17] even more when considering that in the act of seeing other senses are implied:

> The gaze, as Belting (2001) also underlined, is not an abstract concept, but—individually or socially—embodied and connected to the other senses through which we perceive the world, as well as emotional and cognitive ways of meaning making: Bredekamp names feeling, thinking, touching and listening as fundamental dimensions of perception.[18]

This opens up a dynamic study of images, involving a wide range of elements and questioning the function of images in early modern religious circles. What do these images tell us about how religious practices were lived? What are their functions in a specific context?

To this can be added a gender perspective since the use of feminine figures in religious images produces its own significations and generates new questions for specific approaches.[19] To take the example discussed by Pauwels, what does it mean for the audience of Kishangarh that the mistress of the king and poet, Banī-ṭhanī, is inserted in the paintings? What is her role? How is she perceived by the viewers? Interestingly, Pauwels notes that in one of the paintings she is represented in 'her real-life role as a performer'. What are the various roles she could take or not take?

From images to texts?

I would like to end this introduction with an attempt to trace visual influences in poetry. In the early modern world, borders were porous and constantly in flux, the norm was fixed through exchanges rather than through fixed strategies: languages used for literary purposes were numerous and the authors's lexicon was large, religious traditions shared ideas and concepts, literary motives were found in various genres. These exchanges can be studied through the analysis of texts but also through orality and visuality since cultural deeds are produced by the

17 See, for example, Burger (2010).

18 Knauss and Pezzoli-Olgiati (2015b), p. 8. Hans Belting has adopted a perspective from anthropology in his work on images; see his *Bild-Anthropologie. Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft* (2001). Horst Bredekamp a perspective from art history; see his *Theorie des Bildakts* (2010), recently translated in English with the title *Image Acts: A Systematic Approach to Visual Agency* (2018). See also T*he Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling* by David Morgan (2012).

19 See the special issue of *Religion and Gender* entitled *The Normative Power of Images: Religion, Gender, Visuality* edited by Knauss and Pezzoli-Olgiati (2015a). Two articles present examples from India: Jakobsh (2015) and Cattoni (2015).

use of various communication media. Literary historians generally study these exchanges through intertextuality, but as it is shown in this part, the study of visual sources crossed with textual sources is a great contribution (as has already been shown for orality) to the making of history. Due to our textocentric perspective and to the sources at our disposal, much of our focus is on visual material from illustrated manuscripts, that is, materials linked to a text. But we know that paintings are not always connected with a specific text and that some of them circulated independently.[20] Even if an image was at an initial stage connected to a text and produced or influenced by it, it sometimes separated from it and pursued its own life. In such cases, the image was transmitted from one hand to another without any textual link.

Connected to a text or not, visual representations were part of the early modern culture as well as literary texts. From such a starting point is it possible to read a text in order to identify traces of visual influences? For such an approach, we need a motif largely diffused through visuality and textuality. The description of the *nāyikā* is one of them. Indeed, the beautiful heroine is represented in a large number of images.[21] Some of them are directly related to illustrated texts as famous *rīti* works, specialized in the description of the feminine figure through *nāyikābheda* (for example, Keśavdās's *Rasikapriyā*[22] or Bihārī's *Satasaī*[23]). Others are not related to any texts. In addition, paintings representing other genres such as Ragamala or *bārahmāsā* also depict feminine heroines, sharing with the literary *nāyikā* common features related to female beauty and eroticism.[24] Also, a large number of independent images portraying female figures are understood as representations of *nāyikā*s.

In the example developed below, I suggest using this corpus of images to read a description of a *nāyikā* written by the poet Dev (*c.* 1675–1767?) in the first half of the eighteenth century in a work called *Rasavilāsa* (1726?).[25] This text is made up of almost exclusively *nāyikābheda*s, some of them being quite innovative for

20 On the circulation of paintings, painters, patrons and viewers, see Aitken (2010), pp. 48–49.

21 See *A Celebration of Love. The Romantic Heroine in the Indian Arts* edited by Dehejia (2004), which compiles articles on the *nāyikā* figure and its multiple representations through the iconography of various schools. See also Aitken (1997) on the representation of femininity in Kangra style painting, Garimella (1998) on the figure of the *sakhī* in Rajput painting and the forthcoming book by Aitken and Busch on their project 'Aesthetic Worlds of the Indian Heroine'.

22 See Desai (1995).

23 See Randhawa (1966).

24 For exchanges between the literary *nāyikā* portraiture and Ragamala paintings, see Aitken (2013), especially pp. 48–51.

25 For a complete analysis of this work, see Cattoni (2019). A chapter is dedicated to the *nāyikābheda* discussed here with an intertextual perspective.

a genre deeply established in eighteenth-century Braj literature. One of these *nāyikābheda*s, developed in the three first chapters of the *Rasavilāsa*, is elaborated on the base of the *jāti* of the *nāyikā*. In it, the poet divides the description of the heroine in six groups depending on where she lives (in the city, in the village, in the forest, and so on), enumerating then the *nāyikā*s and the *jāti* they embody. One of this group depicts the *nāyikā*s who live on the road (*pathikavadhū*). According to Dev, they are four: the *vanijārī* (travelling merchant), the *joginī* (yogini, female ascetic),[26] the *naṭī* (itinerant artist), and the *kañjarini* (member of the *kañjar* community). I am interested here in the yogini (*joginī*), described as such by the poet:

> Here is the yogini:
>
> The female beggar wanders from one forest to another with the power of her youth;
> the residents of the forest remain stuck by her mastery of the raga.
>
> She plays *cikārā*,[27] she sings sweet melodies;
> having heard this sound, the sages remain irritated with this sound in their head.
>
> She charms the great serpent, many trees, snakes and birds;
> having listened, how many Kolas and Bhīlas[28] keep complaining?
>
> The lion, the jackal and the leopard stand near, looking at her;
> the spotted deer, the monkey and the dark-coated antelope remain delighted.[29]

The yogini is not a common figure of *nāyikābheda*s. In fact, the entire *bheda* is very uncommon for the genre, which leaves free space for the poet's creativity and new influences. Unlike other descriptions of the *nāyikā*, the poem describing the yogini does not give many indications about her physical appearance, except

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26 *Joginī* is a polysemic term referring to various categories of human or divine beings. Here, we can assume that the poet is talking of an itinerant female ascetic. For definitions of the yogini and analyses in different contexts, see the articles collected in the book edited by Keul (2013).

27 A two-stringed, bowed instrument similar in type to the sarangi.

28 Tribes living in the forest.

29 My translation.
jogini yathā//
ḍolai vana vana jora jovana ke jācakani
rāga vasa kīne vanavāsī vījhi rahe hai/
kīgirī vajāvati madhura sura gāvati su
dhuni suni sīsa dhuni muni ṣījhi rahe hai/
mohe mahāpannaga aneka aga naga ṣaga
kāna dai dai kola bhīla kete jhījhi rahe hai/
ṭhāḍhe ḍhiga vāgha viga cīte citavata draga
jhāṣamṛga sāṣamṛga rojha rījhi rahe hai//
RV 3.33, as edited by Malviya (2002).

that she is young. But three elements seem important here: first, the context of the forest; second, the fact that the *nāyikā* plays music; and third, that she charms all the beings living in the forest. For the description of the yogini, the poet Dev has designed a scene in which a young woman is charming all the inhabitants of the forest (human beings, animals, and plants) with her music. We know that she is a yogini only by the title at the beginning of the poem (*jogini yathā*)[30] and by the use of *jācakani* (female beggar) in the first line. If we think of a yogini, we could imagine another kind of description. For example, Dev could have described the specific colour of her clothes, how her hair is arranged, her gait, and so on. Also, as she is categorized as a *nāyikā* living on the roads, she could have been described as walking in a middle of a lane and not in the specific context of the forest—even if the forest is the place for ascetics and seers.

Looking at images portraying the female ascetic, I found two sets of paintings sharing common features with Dev's description of the yogini, helping us to understand the choices made by the poet for his portrait. I recall here that a direct influence is not implied between the images discussed here and Dev's poem as there is no evidence of direct contact between the poet and those paintings (periods of time and places being also different). But if we assume that cultural deeds, artists, and patrons are all in circulation, if they move from one place to another, this means that literary and visual motives developed inside these works move too. Since all, in most likelihood, move on the same roads, they cross each other. In the eighteenth century, typologies of women and of men (understood in a broad sense and not in the restrictive sense of *nāyaka-nāyikā-bheda*) were well known in literature (in different literary genres) as well as in painting (in various schools of painting). Visual representations circulating around could also have been a source of inspiration for the poet of this period, even more if that poet was departing from traditional ways of writing, as was the case for Dev in his *Rasavilāsa*.

The first set of paintings, discussed by Deborah Hutton, is made of a collection of type portraits of yoginis,[31] who are represented on a single page and alone.[32] Except for one painting, they all show the yogini in a landscape with palaces in the background and for two of them, the yogini holds a musical instrument on her shoulder. One is called 'Yogini with veena' (*c*. 1590, Bijapur) and the other

30 The term *jogini* also appear when the poet lists the *nāyikā*s of this *bheda* (RV 3.31).

31 Hutton (2006), pp. 83–96. The paintings discussed are linked to the court of Bijapur and are dated from the early 1590s to 1640. Hutton mentions later paintings, from the seventeenth and eighteenth century, also from the Deccan and from Lucknow (see note 33, p. 183). Hutton defines these yogini paintings as type portraits because 'they represent the female ascetic as a type, rather than portraying actual, individual as-cetics.' (p. 89)

32 These paintings are not folios from illustrated manuscripts. 'Most likely, at some point in their histories, the pages were part of albums exhibiting examples of painting, poetry, and calligraphy.' (Ibid., p. 89)

'Yogini playing a tambur' (*c*. 1605–1640, Bijapur).[33] Hutton analyses the whole set of images as 'intimately relate[d] to the Sufic ideals of the lover and the beloved as expressed in literature and poetry'.[34] She also shows, drawing on specific elements such as the jewellery worn by the yoginis, that the portraits are closely linked to courtly life. The women who are depicted are in fact noble women disguised as yoginis, this motif being also the purpose of a kind of Urdu romance.[35] We see here how much these visual representations are linked to literary motives, the 'infinite dialogue' we were talking about above.

Several elements of these paintings are interesting for our discussion of Dev's poem, as they are in correlation with the yogini as described by the poet. First, the representation of the yogini in a landscape in which the vegetation is prominent. Even if palaces are in the background, the yogini is clearly not in a garden but more in something similar to a forest.[36] Second, the musical instrument held by two of the yoginis, described as musicians just like Dev's yogini. Third, the fact that they are depicted alone. The yogini is in the centre of the painting and is its main subject; nothing else catches the eye of the viewer, just as the *nāyikā* is the central figure of the poem. Fourthly and finally, the treatment of the yogini as a type of woman instead of a specific individual, which is a basic component of *nāyikābheda*.

Beside these paintings specifically dedicated to the depiction of the yogini, another set of images can be understood as in dialogue with Dev's poem. These images come from Ragamala illustrations. Ragamalas share elements with *nāyaka-nāyikā-bheda*s, such as the gendered representation of male and female in *rāga* and *rāginī*. The genre was illustrated early in time and circulated very widely,[37] which increases the possibilities of exchanges. A specific *rāginī* is particularly stimulating for this discussion; it is the illustration of the *āsāvarī rāginī*. In general, she is depicted in a landscape, sometimes seated on a rock or a hill, sometimes in a cave. She is surrounded by plants and trees. Most of the time, she looks like an ascetic, with appropriate clothes and her hair tied up on her head.[38] She is always shown charming serpents, all crawling in her direction, and some-

33 Ibid., figure 3.5, p. 86 and figure 3.6, p. 88 respectively.
34 Ibid., p. 84.
35 Ibid., p. 93–96.
36 See, in particular, plate 17, 'Yogini by a stream', *c*. 1605–1640, Bijapur (ibid.).
37 Miner (2015), par. 12 of the online version of the article <https://books.openedition.org/obp/2526?lang=fr>. (Accessed 27 September 2018).
38 A clear example is in the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales: 'Asavari Ragini', seventeenth century, opaque watercolour on paper, 15.6 × 11.0 cm, 37.2010. Gift of Dr Nigel and Mrs Norma Hawkins, 2010. Donated through the Australian Government Cultural Gifts Program. Online at <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/37.2010/>. (Accessed 27 September 2018).

Figure 1 'Asavari ragini, from a Ragamala series' by Nasiruddin, 1605, Chawand, opaque watercolour on paper, 20.7 × 18.6. Victoria and Albert Museum, IS.38-1953.

times playing the flute.[39] In some paintings, she is also shown in the middle of the forest, with all the elements just described, but also surrounded with several animals, captivated by her, just as in figure 1[40].

As in Dev's poem, the *rāginī* of the painting 'charms the great serpent, many trees, snakes and birds'. They are all attracted by her, even the trees which are bending in her direction in a movement of attraction and protection. The antelope, the deer, and the lion described in Dev's poem are also present. In other illustra-

39 See the example in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston: 'Asavari Ragini, from a Ragamala series', late seventeenth century, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 29.2 × 20.4 cm, 17.2913. Ross-Coomaraswamy Collection. Online at <https://www.mfa.org/collections/object/asavari-ragini-from-a-ragamala-series-149430>. (Accessed 28 September 2018).

40 Published in Guy and Swallow (1990), plate 113, p. 132, and in Topsfield (2001), figure 6, p. 23.

tions, the monkeys are represented.[41] The *āsāvarī rāginī* is close to the yogini described in the previous set of images by several aspects, and she is also very close to the *nāyikā* of the *Rasavilāsa*.

Dev, being himself an itinerant poet, having worked for many patrons in different places, was certainly familiar with this kind of visual material, which probably inspired his poetry and his description of the yogini. Images have their own life and may be a source of inspiration for poets. For the researcher they may turn out to be an essential tool to visualize a text and help to decipher its complexity.

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41 See, for example, the illustration in the collection of the Harvard Art Museums: 'Asavari ragini', illustration from a Ragamala (Garland of Melodies) series, 1973.174. <https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/215365?position=1>. (Accessed 27 September 2018).

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